

Message Text

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PAGE 01 EC BRU 08508 011840Z

61

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PASS AGRICULTURE

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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS
SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 9

REF: (A) EC BRUSSELS 8005, (B) EC BRUSSELS 8251

1. SUMMARY: A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS HAS BEEN CALLED FOR SEPTEMBER 9 TO DISCUSS THE EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT AND THE COMPATIBILITY OF NATIONAL MEASURES WITH EC RULES. FURTHER SUSPENSIONS OF EC TARIFFS ON VEGETABLES MAY ALSO BE DISCUSSED. END SUMMARY.

2. AT THE REQUEST OF THE COMMISSION, THE COUNCIL HAS DECIDED TO HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS ON SEPTEMBER 9. THE MEETING WILL DEAL WITH THE EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT AND WILL FOCUS ON THREE TOPICS:

(1) ASSESSMENT OF THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND OUTLOOK FOR FARM COMMODITIES;

(2) PRESERVATION OF UNHINDERED INTRA-COMMUNITY TRADE;
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PAGE 02 EC BRU 08508 011840Z

(3) NATIONAL MEASURES TAKEN TO DEAL WITH THE DROUGHT--
IN PARTICULAR, THEIR COMPATIBILITY WITH COMMUNITY RULES.

3. IN A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS ANNOUNCING THE
SPECIAL MEETING, COMMISSIONER LARDINOIS STATED
THAT THE ESTIMATES OF A POOR HARVEST MADE IN JULY HAD BEEN
"CONFIRMED." HE SAID THAT THE GRAIN HARVEST WOULD BE BETWEEN
90 AND 92 MILLION TONS, THAT SUGAR PRODUCTION WOULD PROBABLY
BE ONLY 9 TO 9.5 TONS, AND THAT MILK PRODUCTION SHOULD
BE ABOUT THE SAME AS IN 1975. WE HAVE SINCE TALKED WITH
COMMISSION OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN GATHERING EC PRODUCTION
ESTIMATES AND THEY TELL US HAT THE FIGURES CITED BY LARDINOIS
ARE VERY ROUGH. THEY ARE CURRENTLY REVIEWING THEIR ESTIMATES
AND PROMISED TO GIVE US THESE FIGURES WITHIN A DAY OR SO.

4. COMMISSION OFFICIALS TELL US THAT THEY REGARD THE MAINTENANCE
OF UNHINDERED INTRA-COMMUNITY AGRICULTURAL TRADE AS THE KEY
ITEM ON THE AGENDA. IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS THERE HAVE APPARENTLY
BEEN PROBLEMS WITH FRENCH OBSTRUCTION OF EXPORTS OF FORAGE AND
OTHER PRODUCTS IN SHORT SUPPLY TO THE OTHER MEMBER STATES. THE
COMMISSION FEELS THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT SUCH PRACTICES BE
AVOIDED.

5. ON THE ISSUE OF NATIONAL DROUGHT AIDS, THE COMMISSION FEELS
THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE AN EARLY DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE
PROBLEMS WITH THE MEMBER STATES. THEY HOPE TO ACHIEVE SOME
SORT OF CONSENSUS AMONG THE MEMBER STATES ON WHICH AIDS ARE
PERMISSIBLE. OUR CONTACTS WITH COMMISSION OFFICIALS AND
PERMDELS LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT NO WRITTEN GUIDELINES ON
NATIONAL AIDS WILL EMERGE FROM THE SEPTEMBER 9 MEETING. THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROCEDURE FOR A MEMBER STATE OR COMMISSION
REVIEW OF NATIONAL AIDS MAY ALSO BE DISCUSSED. WE EXPECT THAT
THE COMMISSION WILL BE VERY FLEXIBLE IN JUDGING THE COMPATIBILITY
OF NATIONAL DROUGHT AIDS WITH EC OBLIGATIONS.

6. THESE SOURCES ALSO TELL US THAT THEY EXPECT THE COMMISSION
TO RESIST CALLS FOR EC FUNDING OF NATIONAL DROUGHT MEASURES.
THE DUTCH PERMDEL SUGGESTED THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD AWAIT A
FORMAL REQUEST OF THE COUNCIL BEFORE IT WOULD INVOLVE ITSELF
FINANCIALLY IN SUCH MEASURES. IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER OR NOT THE
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PAGE 03 EC BRU 08508 011840Z

COMMISSION INTENDS TO PROPOSE ANY NEW DROUGHT MEASURES AT
THE SEPTEMBER 9 MEETING. A COMMISSION OFFICIAL TELLS US THAT
THE COMMISSION WILL TRY TO USE EXISTING PIPELINES AS MUCH AS
POSSIBLE FOR THE FUNNELING OF DROUGHT AIDS.

8. A MEMBER OF THE DUTCH PERMDEL TELLS US THAT HE EXPECTS THE
COUNCIL TO CONSIDER THE SUSPENSION OF EC TARIFFS ON GREEN BEANS,
ONIONS AND POSSIBLY OTHER VEGETABLES (REF B). HE DOES NOT

EXPECT THIS ISSUE TO BE RESOLVED IN THE SPECIAL AGRICULTURAL
COMMITTEE MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 7. HE THOUGHT THAT THE EXTENSION
OF THE EXISTING TARIFF SUSPENSIONS FOR POTATOES AND CERTAIN
FRESH AND CHILLED VEGETABLES MIGHT ALSO BE DISCUSSED.

9. IT IS NOT EXPECTED THAT THE DAIRY REFORM PACKAGE WILL BE
DISCUSSED.HINTON

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